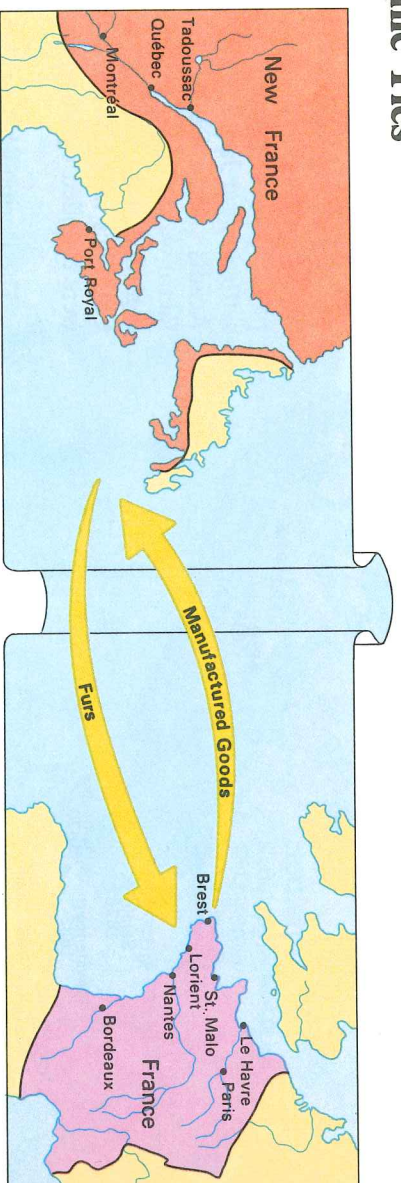


61 France and New France: Economic Ties

Since medieval times, furs from the northern forests of Europe had been highly profitable items of trade. Among the most prized were furs used in the making of fashionable hats. By the sixteenth century the European supply of furs suitable for these hats was nearly exhausted. At the same time the demand for such hats increased as commerce in Europe expanded and the number of wealthy merchants and nobles grew. The North American trade in beaver pelts, which were both abundant and ideal for making high-quality hats, offered a prospect of limitless profit. By the mid-1500's, the beaver hat had become the height of fashion.



Practical manufactured goods like knives, pots and axes were in greatest demand by the Indians. The illustration below shows how axes and other goods were traded for pelts.

The Axe and the Pelt

He will take the skin to his village where the women will cure it. The pelt will then be traded to an Indian middleman for European trade goods.

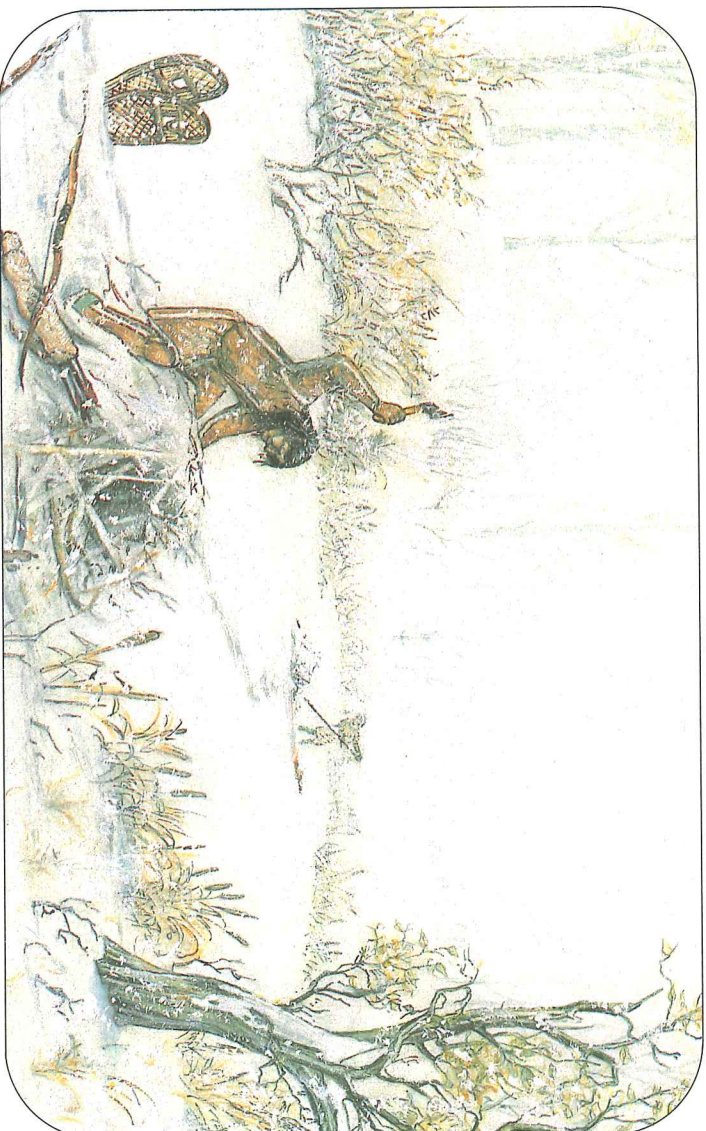
The middleman will take the pelt to a trading post to be exchanged for more trade goods.

The French Canadian traders will ship the pelt to Montréal where merchants will buy it and ship it to France.

In France the fur will be graded and sold at an auction to a hat maker.

This picture shows the first step in the fur trade from an Indian's point of view. An Indian hunter is chopping into a beaver lodge with a metal axe made in Europe.

New France



An Indian uses the axe to build a canoe, chop firewood, and open beaver lodges.

He trades it to an Indian for beaver pelts.

In Montréal a fur trader buys the axe and takes it to his post.

A French supply agent buys the axe and ships it to New France.

A blacksmith makes an iron axe.

He will make a hat from this pelt (and other pelts) and sell it to a wealthy and fashionable Frenchman.

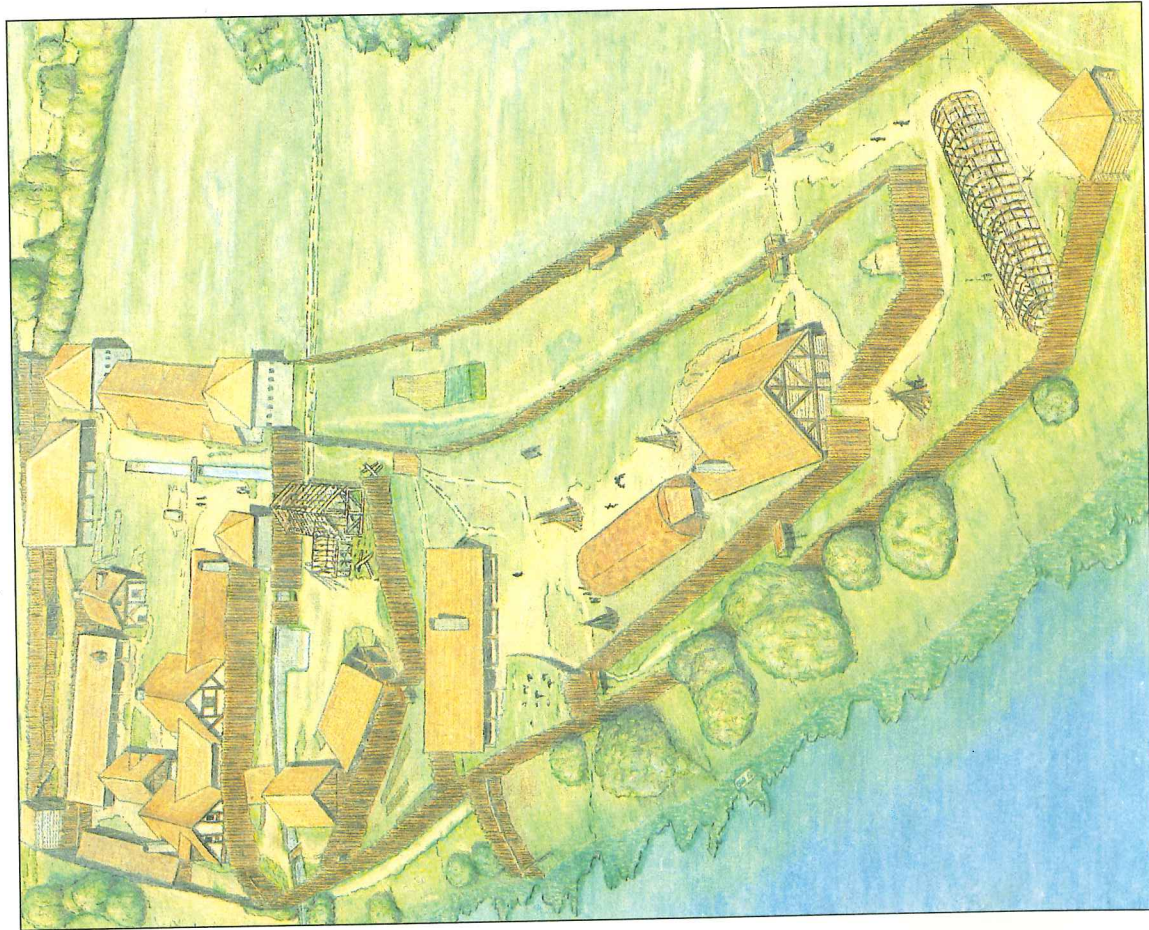
France

The first step in the fur trade from the French point of view comes when iron ore is mined and refined.

Ste. Marie among the Hurons: A Missionary Settlement 62

In the early 1600's French missionaries often settled in tribal villages and attempted to convert the Indians to the Christian faith. However, the settlement of Ste. Marie among the Hurons, located in what is now Southern Ontario, was perhaps the most ambitious missionary venture.

Artist's conception of Ste. Marie mission centre



Study the map and the illustration together. Be prepared to think about the design of the settlement.

Does it seem that there was a defensive advantage in the location of this settlement? What might this have been?

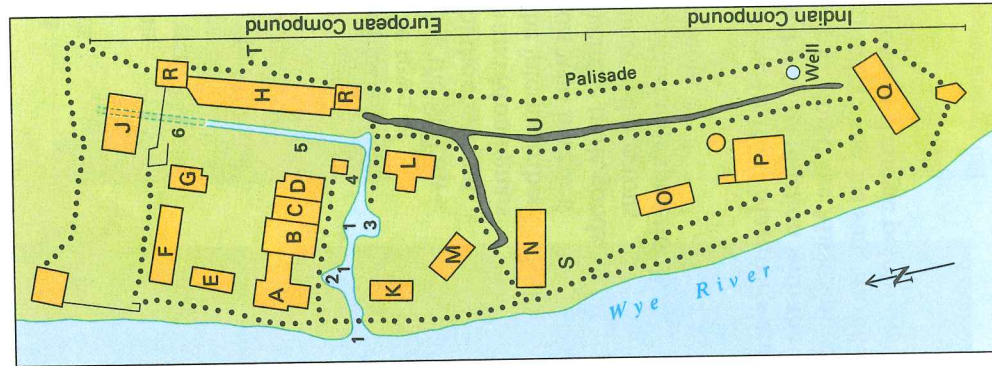
Did the Hurons live within the walls of the settlement? How do the map and the illustration show that this is so?

What are some possible reasons the missionaries and Hurons might have had for building a wall around the entire settlement?

Why do you suppose the settlement is subdivided into four walled areas?

Why might the missionaries have constructed a series of locks on a water channel that came right into the walls of the settlement?

Plan of Ste. Marie



Timber Buildings

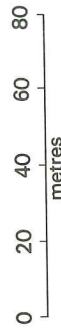
- A Jesuit Residence
- B Chapel
- C Carpenter Shop
- D Blacksmith Shop
- E Cookhouse
- F Stable
- G Dwelling
- H Barracks
- J Granary
- K Dwelling
- L Dwelling
- M Shoemaker's Shop
- N Church of St. Joseph
- O Longhouse
- P Hospital
- Q Longhouse Frame

Other Features

- R Stone Bastion
- S Christian Cemetery
- T Gateway
- U Ditchworks for Defence

Water Features

- 1 Lock
- 2 Loading Basin
- 3 Landing Basin
- 4 East-West Water Channel
- 5 North-South Water Channel
- 6 Aqueduct



63 The Fur Trade in New France

The fur trade in North America was small at first. However, when the beaver hat became fashionable in Europe the trade grew rapidly. The Indians played a very important role in the development of the fur trade, both as trappers and middlemen traders. By the late 1500's the Indians of the St. Lawrence region had become partners with the French in a very profitable and efficient business. Later, as the fur trade expanded westward, other Indians became involved.

In 1603 Samuel de Champlain arrived to trade and to find the best fur areas. His accounts of the St. Lawrence area so impressed the French king that he commissioned the Sieur de Monts to establish a settlement and improve the fur trade. However, de Monts and Champlain did not return to the St. Lawrence but instead established unsuccessful posts at Île Ste. Croix (1604-1605) and at Port Royal.

In 1608 Champlain returned to the St. Lawrence to establish a crucial fur-trading centre — the town of Québec. Soon trading posts extended along the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes into the heart of the continent. The French used the Algonquins, Hurons and Montagnais as their middlemen to obtain furs from the interior tribes, but made enemies of the powerful Iroquois who harassed traders on the lengthy waterways over which the trade goods were transported. Thus, fur trading remained a dangerous business until the late 1660's, when French military expeditions helped reduce the threat posed by the Iroquois.

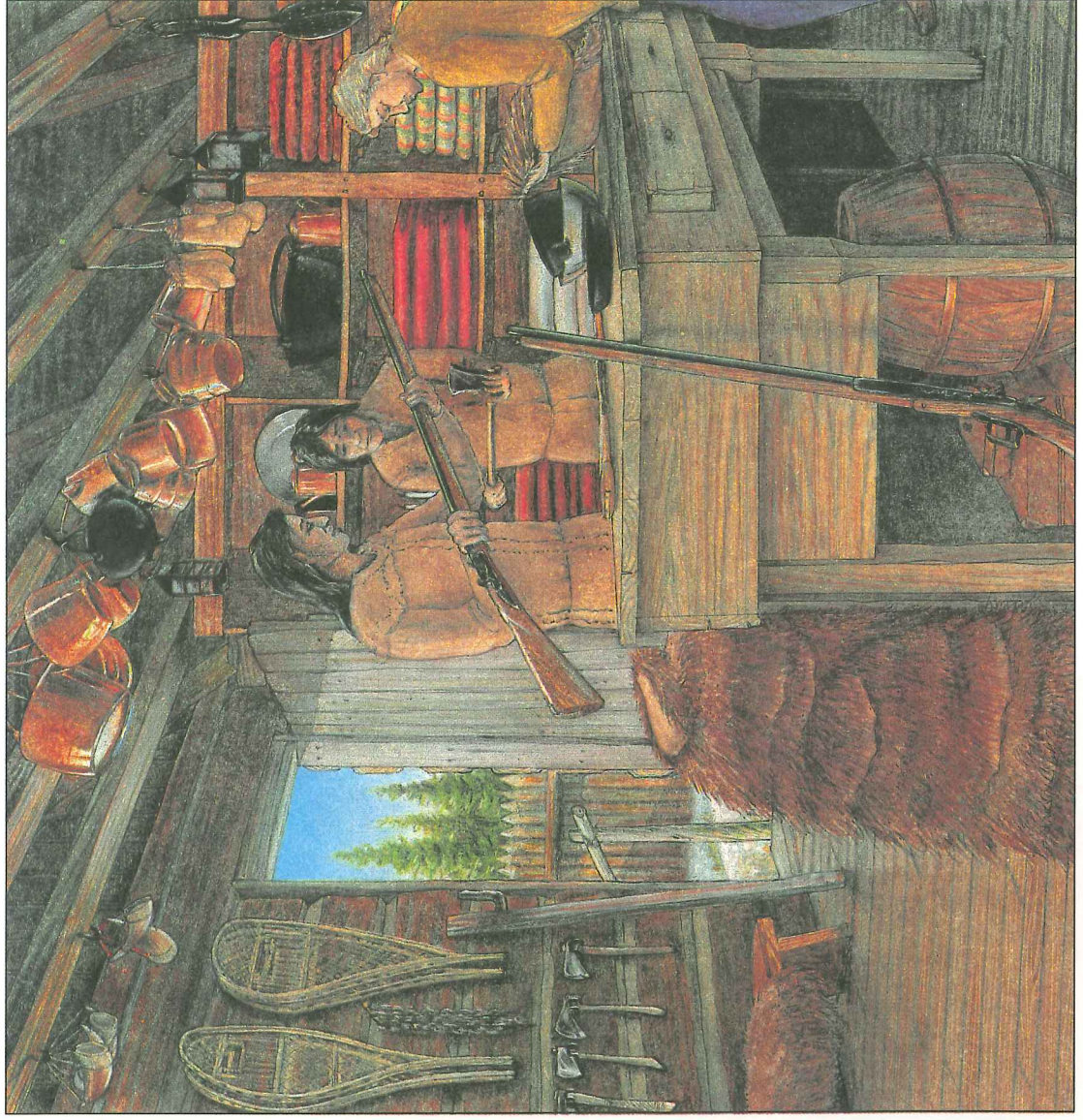
French fur traders opened many new areas. In 1672 Marquette and Joliet discovered the Mississippi and followed it to its junction with the Arkansas River. Between 1679 and 1682 La Salle explored the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico. Between 1731 and 1743 La Vérendrye and his sons travelled as far west as the Assiniboine River and set up trading posts at strategic points along the way.



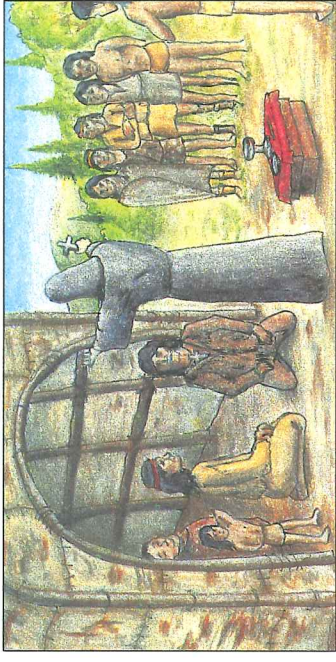
- French Posts Established
- 1600-1670
- 1671-1713
- 1714-1763
- ▲ Hudson's Bay Co. Posts to 1763
- Settlement (includes year of founding)
- Routes of Explorers
- Marquette & Joliet 1673
- La Salle 1679-1682
- La Vérendrye 1731-1738
- La Vérendrye's Sons 1742-1743

Impact of European Culture on Native Peoples 64

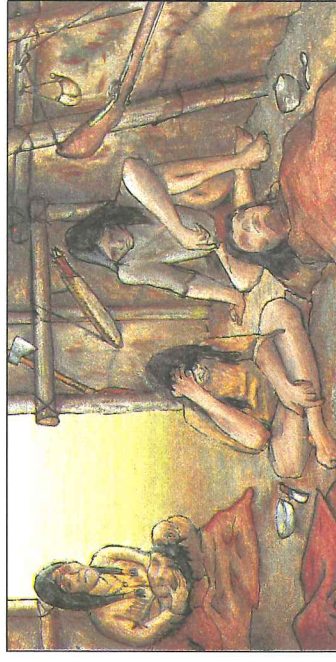
Contact between people often results in cultural sharing. Europeans, Africans, Asians and the Native Peoples of North America all contributed to North American culture. When the Europeans settled among the Indians or displaced them, Indian lives were greatly changed. At the same time the Indians influenced the lives of Europeans. The illustrations on this page show some of the ways in which Indian culture was changed.



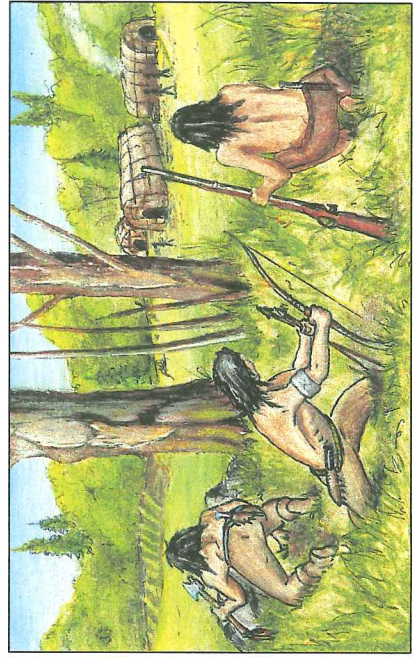
Through the fur trade, the Indians became exposed to, and dependent on, European culture and its products. Accordingly, their lives were changed dramatically.



Whenever possible, most Europeans tried to prevent the Indians from practising their own beliefs. Instead, they sought to convert them to Christianity.



Indians had little or no resistance to many European diseases. Partly as a result of this, the native population in North America was reduced considerably.



Europeans encouraged tribes to compete in the fur trade. This often led to intertribal wars.